

## Health Status of African-Americans in Tennessee<sup>13</sup>

### **Homicide and Diabetes -- Issues in Blacks' Mortality and Morbidity Experience in Tennessee**

- Homicide was the fourth leading cause of death for black males in Tennessee, and did not figure among the top five causes of death for white males. The age-adjusted homicide death rate for black males was 66 per 100,000 in 1996 compared to 8 among white males. This represents an eight-fold excess in male homicide rates among blacks in Tennessee. Black females also had higher age-adjusted homicide death rates (11 per 100,000) than their white counterparts (3 per 100,000) by nearly four times.
- Young black males were at particularly high risk for homicide compared to young white males. Among 15-19 year-olds, homicide rates were 14 times higher among black than white males at 116 compared to 8, respectively in 1996.
- Young black females had homicide rates that were more than double those of white females ages 15-19 (11 versus 5) in 1996.
- Homicide risk factor profiles differed by race among male high school students in Tennessee. More black male high school students were involved in gang fights in the past 12 months than white male students. Similar proportions of black and white male students carried weapons in the past 12 months. A higher percentage of black students reported having sold illegal drugs in the past 12 months, while a higher percentage of white male students reported having fights or arguments because of using alcohol or other drugs.
- "Other infectious and parasitic diseases" is a cause of death category composed very largely of HIV/AIDS deaths, and is used as a proxy for such deaths. In 1996, HIV/AIDS was the sixth leading cause of death for black males at 52 per 100,000 compared to 10 per 100,000 for white males, more than a five-fold difference.
- HIV/AIDS age-adjusted death rates were five times higher among black females than white females at 10 compared to 2 per 100,000, respectively.

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<sup>13</sup>Following the model of the U.S. Census and CDC, the terms "black" and "white" are used in this report for comparability.